

Terms of Reference

Biodiversity Cabinet Working Group

1.0 Background

- 1.1 At the council meeting of 10 September 2020, council agreed the following Notice of Motion:

This Council acknowledges that climate change is not the only challenge facing our natural environment and has agreed to set up a Cabinet Task Group chaired by the appropriate portfolio holder to work with our partners including Norfolk County Council and the Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership.

Any recommendations on relevant issues such as habitat protection and creation, the creation of a pollinator action plan and the creation of wildflower verges will be brought to Cabinet via the Environment & Community Panel before consideration at Council.

- 1.2 At further cabinet meetings on the 15 March 2022, and 17 January 2023, it was agreed that the Biodiversity Task Group be set up to be politically proportionate, and that it should also consider the recommendations of the Environment & Community Panel's Urban Wildlife Informal working group.
- 1.3 The Task Group is therefore to be made up of FIVE members with political proportionality (2 Independent Partnership, 2 Conservative and 1 Labour) and Chaired by the Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Biodiversity.
- 1.4 Since the original council motion, the Environment Act 2021 has come into force. In that legislation, it is of note that public authorities who operate in England, including councils and local planning authorities, must consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity in England. This is the strengthened 'biodiversity duty' introduced by the Environment Act 2021. This means that, as a public authority, this Council must:
- Consider what we can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity
 - Agree policies and specific objectives based on our consideration
 - Act to deliver our policies and achieve our objectives

- 1.5 According to the Environment Act the council must complete its first consideration of what action to take for biodiversity by 1 January 2024 and, as a local planning authority, must also publish a biodiversity report, no later than 1 January 2026.
- 1.6 Meetings of the group will take place monthly or less frequently as required. Deputies will only be allowed by agreement of the Chair.
- 1.7 There will be budget implications that need to be assessed when considering which recommendations to take forward.

2.0 Terms of Reference

- 2.1 To consider the recommendations of the Urban Wildlife Informal working group.
- 2.2 To work with partners including Norfolk County Council and the Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership on enhancing biodiversity.
- 2.3 To consider opportunities for habitat creation on the council's own open spaces and properties.
- 2.4 To review existing biodiversity work or funding on biodiversity projects provided by the borough council.
- 2.5 To consider the feasibility of a pollinator action plan.
- 2.6 To consider opportunities for habitat protection.
- 2.7 To consider the implications of relevant biodiversity issues affecting the borough council, for example the enhanced 'biodiversity duty', as set out in the Environment Act 2021, and Biodiversity Net Gain.
- 2.8 Make recommendations to the Environment & Community panel, and then to Cabinet and Council, on biodiversity enhancements. This shall include the budget/resource implications of any recommendations.